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## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**Franklin Gull: A New Record for California.**—Three specimens of the Franklin Gull (*Larus franklini*) have been taken by me at Hyperion, Los Angeles County, California, as follows: No. 1500 (coll. of J. E. Law), sex not ascertained, November 22, 1913; no. 2350, male, October 17, 1914; no. 2587, female, November 24, 1914. All three are in similar plumage, and are apparently immature, corresponding closely in appearance to a specimen (labelled "juv.") from Clay County, Texas, taken October 1, 1879 (coll. U. S. National Museum, no. 80007). The latter is in much fresher plumage than either of mine, and my October specimen, though somewhat worn, is again in notably fresher plumage than either of the two November birds.

In two of my specimens (nos. 1500 and 2350) the forehead is largely white, sparsely flecked with dusky; in the third (no. 2587) the whole top of head is dusky, with a little white on the forehead. In all three there is a quite solid dusky area covering cheeks and back of head. A small dusky crescent around front of eye is conspicuous in all. In the November birds the wing coverts are faded and worn, giving a rusty appearance. In number 1500 (taken November 22) the narrow white tips of the primaries are worn almost away, as is much of the edging of the scapulars. The white tips of the rectrices (in new feathers about 5 mm. broad) are also nearly gone.

All three of my birds have the broad black, or dark brown, subterminal band across the tail, covering all but the outer rectrices, the one marking which, in this species as in *L. philadelphia*, is apparently the most obvious means of distinguishing immatures from winter adults. All have the slaty mantle, different from the brownish wing-coverts, and all have the entire under-parts white, though with slaty flecks on sides of upper breast. One of my birds, and also the National Museum immature at hand, shows a slight pinkish tinge on throat and upper breast. In all three of my specimens bill, tarsi and feet are black, showing no trace of the reddish color ascribed to these parts in the several books I have consulted.

Mr. H. S. Swarth, after pronouncing my birds to be *Larus franklini*, procured for my use, through the courtesy of Dr. C. W. Richmond, the loan of two specimens of this species, for comparison, from the collection of the United States National Museum. One of these, a fall immature, is mentioned above. The other (coll. U. S. Nat. Mus. no. 4320) is an adult, beginning to molt into summer plumage. The privilege of examining these specimens was of inestimable value in ascertaining the status of my birds, as there apparently is no material of this sort in Pacific Coast collections, and I wish here to record my appreciation of the courtesy.

The three birds I have collected were taken from large flocks of Bonaparte Gulls (*Larus philadelphia*). They resemble the latter in size and general appearance, but can readily be distinguished in life by their dusky "collar" and dark-colored primaries.

The winter home of the Franklin Gull, as given by the A. O. U. *Check-List*, includes the west coast of South America; and in the British Museum *Catalogue of Birds* (vol. 25, 1896, p. 194) there are specimens listed from the west coast of Mexico. Apparently, however, the present record constitutes the first for the Pacific Coast of North America, certainly the first for California. The dates of capture indicate the probability of the species remaining here throughout the winter. Can it be that this bird is a regular visitor to our southern coast, though in limited numbers, and has it simply been overlooked heretofore?—J. E. LAW, *Hollywood, California*.

**Scott Oriole at San Diego in the Fall.**—On September 2, 1914, I saw a male Scott Oriole (*Icterus parisorum*) in eucalytus trees on the Panama-California Exposition grounds in San Diego. This is the latest date on which I have seen this species here.—FRANK STEPHENS, *San Diego, California*.

**Early Nesting of the Texas Nighthawk.**—Oberholser in his recent "Monograph of the Genus *Chordeiles*", p. 93, gives April 27 as the earliest recorded date in the United States for eggs of the Texas Nighthawk (*Chordeiles acutipennis texensis*). Joseph Grinnell in his "Birds of the Pacific Slope of Los Angeles County" (Pasadena Acad. Sci. Publ. no. 2, p. 27) reports the taking by himself of a set of fresh eggs of this species on April 21, 1897, near Pasadena; and this record is quoted by Willett (Pac. Coast Avifauna no. 7, p. 58). On the 17th of April, 1914, I took a set of these eggs in which incubation was slightly advanced, near the San Juan River, in San Luis Obispo County.—WILLIAM LEON DAWSON, *Santa Barbara, California*.

**A Curious Set of Gambel Quail Eggs.**—During the season of 1913 I collected several interesting sets of common birds, among them one of fifteen eggs of the Gambel Quail, taken May 24, in the mesquite forest near Tucson. The photograph (fig. 38) shows this set, which was unusual in the great variation in the sizes of the eggs; for it contains not only the smallest, but also the largest egg of *Lophortyx gambeli* that I have ever taken.

The largest and smallest are shown side by side in the center of the photograph, and the others are arranged in the order in which I give the sizes (in inches), as follows: .94x.74; 1.06x.84; 1.04x.85; 1.10x.89; 1.07x.88; 1.17x.91; 1.18x.90; 1.22x.93; 1.19x.95; 1.27x.96; 1.31x.95; 1.30x.98; 1.31x1.03; 1.36x1.00; 1.45x1.03. The average of forty normal specimens is 1.23x.93.—F. C. WILLARD, *Tombstone, Arizona*.

**The Breeding of the Snowy Egret in California.**—It is well-nigh incredible that the early "fathers", Gambel, Heermann, Cooper, and the rest, who regarded the Snowy Herons (*Egretta candidissima*) as "abundant" in California should have recorded no specific instance of their nesting within our borders. Cooper's naive remark that "In summer it migrates to the summit of the Sierra Nevada" shows, perhaps, how wide of the mark they were in their search. Without a shadow of doubt this species, save for a thirty-year period of persecution by plume hunters, has nested in certain flooded low-lands of

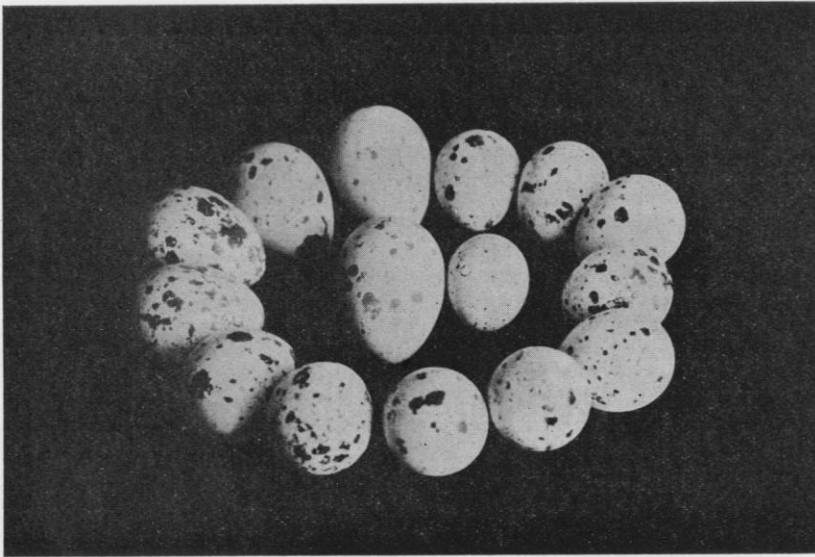


Fig. 38. A CURIOUS SET OF EGGS OF THE GAMBEL QUAIL

Photo by F. C. Willard.

our interior valleys from time immemorial; yet it remained, apparently, for a lucky accident of the past season to establish the first authentic breeding record for the State.

At a point in Merced County some miles from Dos Palos, my son and I, on the 26th of May, 1914, came upon five pairs of these birds nesting in close association with a colony of Black-crowned Night Herons, on a cat-tail island in the middle of a large overflow pond. The Squawks outnumbered the Snowies fifty to one, and it was impossible in the confusion attendant upon approach to tell just where the wary Herons got up. A thorough canvass of the reedy city, however, discovered five nests which contained a uniformly smaller type of eggs, four of five and one of four. One of these began to hatch on the day following, and the eggs yielded in turn chicks covered with a sparse long white down. The operation established also the fact that the Snowy Heron deposits its eggs every other day, and the complementary fact that incubation begins with the deposition of the first egg. Indeed it could not well be otherwise, for a single day's exposure to that blazing interior sun would addle an egg, however hardy.

The youngsters showed, as the days passed, an exaggerated disparity in size and strength, yet even when a week old appeared amazingly small and helpless. Neither did

they appear at all pugnacious, as do baby Squawks, but drew away timidly at the approach of the hand, and for the rest divided their time between panting lustily and scrambling about in search of shade.

The parent birds on all occasions were perfectly silent, and they maintained a discreet aloofness—sad commentary on the fiery furnace of affliction through which this gentle race has passed.—WILLIAM LEON DAWSON, *Santa Barbara, California.*

**Additional Records of the California Clapper Rail and Red Phalarope in California.**—On November 22, 1914, Mr. L. P. Bolander, Jr., secured at Tomales Bay, near Point Reyes Station, Marin County, California, the following two specimens which have been donated by him to the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology.

*Rallus obsoletus*, California Clapper Rail (no. 24915, Mus. Vert. Zool.), immature male. This is the first record of the species on the ocean side of the Marin peninsula.

*Phalaropus fulicarius*, Red Phalarope (no. 24916, Mus. Vert. Zool.), immature female, in full winter plumage. The present record is the latest for the season for the north-western coast of California. Beck (Proc. Calif. Acad. Sci., 4th ser., 1910, vol. 3, p. 70) states that there are fifteen specimens of this species in the collection of the California Academy taken near Monterey during December and January.

Early in January, 1915, Mr. F. J. Smith submitted two specimens of Clapper Rail taken on Humboldt Bay, to the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology for determination. The specimens are typical *Rallus obsoletus* (California Clapper Rail). One of these birds was taken by Mr. Fiebig and is at present in the library of the Eureka School. The other is the property of Dr. F. J. Ottmer. These specimens substantiate the Humboldt Bay record made by Cooper and Suckley (Natural History of Washington Territory, 1859, p. 246) and, together with the Tomales Bay specimen, extend the area of occurrence of the species beyond that given by Cooke (U. S. Dept. Agric., bull. 128, 1914, pp. 18, 19).—TRACY I. STORER, *California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California.*

**Red Phalarope in the San Diegan District.**—In view of the scarcity of records of the Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) from inland points in southern California, it seems worth while to publish a statement relative to specimens recently collected by myself at Nigger Slough, Los Angeles County, California. A female in full breeding plumage was secured May 25, 1914. On November 8, 1914, a male and a female in winter plumage were taken from a flock of about fifty of the same species. The next day, covering the same ground, just three of the birds were observed, and I have seen none since.

A large flock of Avocets (*Recurvirostra americana*) was seen, and a pair secured, at the same place, November 15, 1914; and a pair of Marbled Godwits (*Limosa fedoa*) were also taken at this time.—I. D. NOKES, *Los Angeles, California.*

**A Two Hours' Acquaintance With a Family of Water Ouzels.**—On August 5, 1914, we were following down Rattlesnake Creek, near Cisco, Placer County, when our attention was drawn to the screaming of some nestling birds. Water Ouzels (*Cinclus mexicanus unicolor*) had been seen in the vicinity, and the locality seemed to be ideal as a nesting site for this species. A waterfall about fifteen feet in height tumbled over a rocky ledge at this point into a fine large pool of clear water which was surrounded, on all but one side, by perpendicular walls of rock. We were not surprised, therefore, to find, on investigation, a Water Ouzel's nest built in a cleft of the rock about two feet from the falling stream of water. The moss of which the nest was built had formerly been kept green by trickling water, but at this date had begun to turn brown. White excrement below the entrance to the nest led to its discovery.

On approaching the nest, one of the occupants, a well-fledged Water Ouzel, fluttered from the entrance and dropped down into the pool of water below. Here it immediately dove and swam for a distance of six feet or more and at a depth of about two feet below the surface of the water. Quick, short strokes of the wings enabled the bird to swim rapidly in this medium.

A moment later a second bird flew from the nest. This one, unlike the first, did not dive, but swam about on top of the water, using its wings in the same manner, however. Still another young bird remained in the nest, but repeated attempts to dislodge it failed.

An adult with food in its mouth soon appeared, jumping from rock to rock and "bobbing" continuously. Its call was answered by the birds in the water and the one in

the nest. The food brought appeared to consist of a worm of some sort. After feeding one of the birds, which by this time had taken refuge on a small ledge near the water's edge, the adult flew off down the creek evidently in search of more food. A few moments later it again appeared with food in its mouth and fed the same nestling. The method of feeding was typical of most passerine birds, the young bird fluttering its wings and calling as the food was placed in its mouth. The recipient of all of the parent's attention, after prolonged attempts, succeeded in climbing higher out of the water onto a ledge of rock where the sun soon dried its plumage. It was surprising to see how quickly this little bird gained strength. It would huddle up, sitting perfectly still for a few minutes. Then, appearing rested, it would attempt to climb the almost perpendicular wall. The call of the parent was always a signal for a succession of "bobs", exactly similar to those so characteristic of the adults. Within an hour after leaving the nest this little Ouzel was walking around on a small ledge of rock searching in the crevices and pecking at the lichens and moss growing there.

Six times the adult bird appeared with food, and each time fed but one of the young birds in spite of the persistent calls of the other fledgeling which had taken refuge beneath a rock farther down stream. Finally the calls of the bird still in the nest attracted the parent's attention and it was rewarded with a mouthful.

An excellent opportunity was afforded to see the parent bird dive to the bottom of the large pool for food. With a motion too quick for any observance of detail, the bird started head-first for the bottom. The water was clear enough to show that a perpendicular path was taken; on rising to the surface the bird was not more than two feet away from the place where it first dove. The time actually spent under water, observed by means of a watch, proved to be ten seconds. The water was about ten feet deep. Preference seemed to be shown for the swirling water just beneath the fall. On arriving at the surface the oily feathers seemed to shed the water like magic. In swimming, the bird paddled with its feet, using them alternately. The body seemed very buoyant and the unwebbed feet appeared to furnish plenty of power.

Our interest in seeing the fledgeling birds dive and swim led us to again attempt to frighten the remaining bird from the nest. A long stick and a number of pokes at last drove it to take to water. Instead of diving and swimming, this one fluttered along the surface of the water to the rocky wall on the north side of the canyon and then started to climb up the rock. Within ten minutes it had climbed to a height of twelve feet. By approaching slowly, crawling close along the rocky wall, we almost succeeded in catching it. At one time one of us was within arm's length of it.

The above account is interesting as showing the actions and instincts of young birds the first few hours after leaving the nest. The fact that the observations relate to so unique a bird as the Water Ouzel lends added interest.—HAROLD C. BRYANT and AMY M. BRYANT, *Berkeley, California*.

**Notes from the Sea-coast of Southern California.**—On July 15, 1914, while hunting along the beach at Corona del Mar (opposite Balboa beach) I noticed a Barn Swallow (*Hirundo erythrogastra*) flying through the air with a feather in its mouth. The swallow entered a small cave which at low tide is partially filled with water. On entering I found, on a small projection, a nest containing two fresh eggs. The parent bird was apparently still building the nest. This appears to be a late nesting record for this bird.

July 6 this year (1914) I collected a Long-billed Dowitcher (*Macrorhamphus griseus scolopaceus*) on a sand-spit in Balboa bay. As Mr. Willett does not record these birds as occurring in the summer time I consider this an early fall migrant.

While collecting at Laguna Beach the same summer I found a small grassy glade at the top of the hills surrounding the town of Laguna, where the Western Yellow-winged Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum bimaculatus*) was extremely common. With the exception of two birds I saw at Laguna lakes, one of which I collected, I did not find these birds at any other place. Young birds predominated in number, over two-thirds of the specimens I collected being young of the year. In speaking of this Mr. Swarth says: "The Western Yellow-winged Sparrow is a good take. The species has been recently ascertained to breed in this region, but it is not at all common, and there are not many records. The capture of a young bird at the date on which you took your specimen [June 27, 1914] is pretty good evidence of breeding, and I think the fact is worth recording."—LEON LLOYD GARDNER, *Claremont, California*.

**Peculiar Nesting Site of Anthony Towhee.**—On April 25, 1914, a friend called my attention to a nest placed in the topmost box of a stack of berry boxes that were standing on a bench in his barn. At the time, the nest contained two partly incubated eggs of the Anthony Towhee (*Pipilo crissalis senicula*). The bird usually entered the barn through a door near the nest, but when this was closed it entered through a window fully ten feet from the nest. For some reason the nest was deserted after the eggs were about half incubated. This is the first instance where I have found this bird nesting otherwise than in a tree or bush.—WRIGHT M. PIERCE, *Claremont, California*.

**The House Finch as a Parasite.**—Close observation of some of our commonest birds often leads to the discovery of some trait not hitherto ascribed to the species. The practice of making use of the nests of others in which to deposit their eggs is common to many of our North American birds. Among the cowbirds and cuckoos this practice

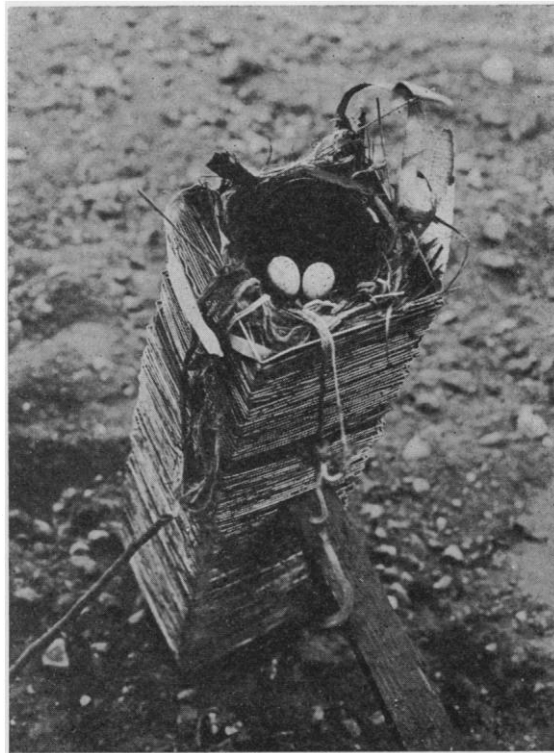


Fig. 39. NEST AND EGGS OF ANTHONY BROWN TOWHEE IN STACK OF BERRY-BOXES

Photo by W. M. Pierce.

is so well known as to need no comment. Certain of the gallinaceous fowls, such as pheasants, partridges, quail, etc., occasionally deposit their eggs in nests of others of their own or allied species.

The waterfowl are represented in this class, many species leaving their eggs to the care of other birds. Thus eggs of the Ruddy Duck, the Redhead, the Shoveller, and others, are frequently found in the nests of other ducks, and coots. Many of the Raptores make use of the deserted nests of crows, ravens, magpies, and others suited to their needs. The sparrow hawks, smaller owls, and numerous species of wrens, chickadees, titmice, etc., use old woodpecker holes.

But as far as I know, the Linnet, or House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis*) is unique among the Fringillidae as a parasite. I first encountered the species under consideration as leaving its eggs to the care of a foster-parent in April, 1908. A nest of

the Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*) was found under a bridge near San Pedro, California, containing five eggs of the Black Phoebe and one egg of the House Finch. All were heavily incubated, the egg of the House Finch not quite so much as the others. As the female Phoebe was brooding when the nest was found, it was apparent that she had no objection to the intruder, or else was not aware of its presence.

The same year I had occasion to examine a nesting colony of Cliff Swallows (*Petrochelidon lunifrons*) near Los Angeles. Two nests examined had been appropriated by House Finches before the builders had laid. The Finches added a few straws and feathers, and were in sole possession when found. A third nest in this same colony held three eggs of the Cliff Swallow and two of the House Finch. The Swallows were as complaisant to the added burden thrust upon them as were the Phoebes, and were incubating contentedly. Had the young Finches hatched, I wonder if they would have survived the "bed-bugs" with which the nest was infested, such conditions not being natural to the species.

A pair of Arizona Hooded Orioles (*Icterus cucullatus nelsoni*) started a nest of palm-leaf fibers in a eucalyptus tree across the street from my home in the city the same year. Before it was quite completed the builders were ousted by the ever-present House Finches, which made a few changes and reared their young in the cosy basket. The Orioles selected another site in the same tree, and raised a brood without further molestation. The following year a pair of Orioles, probably the same pair of the previous year, appeared in the neighborhood, and soon built a nest near the old one. Wishing to ascertain the contents, I got within sight after a strenuous climb, and beheld two eggs of the owners and one of the House Finch. The Orioles seemed to have submitted to the inevitable; and here, I thought, was a good opportunity to see what would happen to the mixed brood when hatched. But I was doomed to disappointment, for the tree was trimmed before further investigation could be made, and a like chance has not yet presented itself.—D. I. SHEPARDSON, *Los Angeles, California*.

**Pink-footed Shearwater on the Coast of Washington.**—An extensive movement of Shearwaters observed at Point Grenville on the coast of Washington August 27, 1910, yielded the customary toll of weaklings cast ashore. Among many stranded specimens of *Puffinus griseus* and some of *P. tenuirostris* I noted carefully (but, unfortunately, had no facilities for preserving) a Shearwater which appears to be *Puffinus creatopus*. My notes say, "Underparts white, changing to sooty on sides of throat, edges of wings and (conspicuously) under tail-coverts"; and make mention of bill notably stouter than that of *P. griseus*. Also "feet very pale, might have been pink in life." I was not at that time acquainted with *P. opisthomelas*, which proves to be a smaller, slender-billed form, —and so buried my notes under a misleading caption.—WILLIAM LEON DAWSON, *Santa Barbara, California*.

**Another Record of the White-throated Sparrow for California.**—With the finding of the White-throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) on January 28, 1915, by the bridge near the new Agricultural building, a new name has been added to the list of birds of the Berkeley campus. The bird was feeding in a patch of chickweed in company with a number of Nuttall White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows, at a distance of about ten feet from where I was standing. I was first attracted by its brighter brown back and its crown stripes which were noticeably different from those of the White- and Golden-crowns. It then turned and I discovered the distinct white throat patch which settled its identification as the White-throated Sparrow. On three subsequent occasions, January 29, February 9 and 15, I have watched a White-throated Sparrow, presumably the same bird, in the same spot. On February 9 I discovered the bird just after it had taken a bath and for a few minutes was in doubt as to its identity because of the ruffled condition of its feathers; but I watched it until it was dry again and the white throat patch was unmistakable. On the other two dates the White-throated Sparrow was feeding in the company of both Nuttall White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows.—MARGARET W. WYTHE, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California*.

**European Widgeon in Washington.**—I have the pleasure of recording the capture of a young male European Widgeon (*Mareca penelope*), which I think is the first ever recorded from the state of Washington. It is a male in fine plumage, and was taken by Mr. L. W. Brehm, of Tacoma; the locality was the Nisqually Flats, Thurston County, Washington. Mr. Brehm informs me that there was a flight of several thousand Baldpates (*Mareca americana*), but that he saw no other birds resembling *penelope*. Date of capture January 12, 1915. Identification verified by Dr. A. K. Fisher.—J. H. BOWLES, Tacoma, Washington.

**The California Shrike in Montana:—A Correction.**—A shrike secured at Anaconda, Montana, May 14, 1911, has recently been examined by Mr. H. C. Oberholser and identified as the California Shrike, *Lanius ludovicianus gambeli*. This bird was originally reported as the Migrant Shrike, *L. l. migrans* (CONDOR, xiv, p. 30). It is possible that this bird is only a variant of the White-rumped Shrike, *L. l. excubitorides*, the common breeding form in Montana. I doubt, however, if this is the case, for the bird was taken in a region where the White-rumped Shrike is not known to breed, west of the continental divide, and at an elevation about 1000 feet higher than that of the regular breeding range of the White-rump. There are no records, to my knowledge, of the occurrence of the White-rumped Shrike west of the continental divide in Montana, so that I believe this is a true case of the California bird having wandered east of its regular range during migrations.—ARETAS A. SAUNDERS, West Haven, Connecticut.

**A Winter Record for the MacGillivray Warbler.**—On December 17, 1914, a bird of this species (*Oporornis tolmiei*) was located by its note in a dense hedge of cypress close by the old ranch house at the La Brea Fossil Beds. Nearly all the morning it called frequently from almost the same spot, where it kept closely to the densest place, whence it ventured occasionally a few feet into a bed of horehound adjoining. It refused to leave cover even when a grocer's wagon drove within eight feet. When finally secured it proved to be minus all rectrices, a fact that may account for the specimen furnishing what appears to be the only winter record for California.—L. E. WYMAN, Museum History, Science, and Art, Los Angeles, California.

**California Condor in Los Angeles County.**—A California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) was observed February 16, 1915, and reported to me, by a gentleman from Covina. The bird was in flight low overhead in the San Jose Hills, near Covina. (This is the little bunch of hills lying between Covina, Puente, Pomona and Lordsburg.) Condors used to be very common in this range of hills, but are so seldom seen now that I thought the instance worth recording.—W. LEE CHAMBERS, Eagle Rock, California.

**New Winter Records for Arizona.**—According to Swarth (Pac. Coast Avif. no. 10, pp. 14, 38), the two following are winter records for Arizona:

*Erismatura jamaicensis*. Ruddy Duck. This species was present in small numbers on Roosevelt Lake, Arizona, during my stay in that section, November 30, 1914, to February 3, 1915.

*Calypte anna*. Anna Hummingbird. In many localities along the shore of Roosevelt Lake there are rather extensive groves of "wild tobacco". Here Anna Hummingbirds were plentiful during my entire stay. There may have been other species of hummingbirds present at the time, but *C. anna* was the only one positively identified. An adult male was shot December 1st.—GEORGE WILLETT, Los Angeles, California.